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Libraries on the agenda: Lobbying and advocating for library and information professionals

The author of this book, Claudia Lux, is a German librarian and Honorary Professor at the Institute for Library and Information Science at Humboldt University in Berlin. She has been actively involved in IFLA (the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions), serving as its President from 2007 to 2009, and has also worked at Qatar National Library. Drawing on her vast experience and scholarly expertise, Lux has created a compelling book advocating for the role and work of library and information professionals. This English edition is a revised and significantly expanded version of her original German publication on library advocacy (Lux, 2022).

The book is comprehensive, covering various aspects of lobbying and advocacy across all levels of governance. Although it comprises 19 chapters, they flow logically, following a clear line from the explanation of key concepts to practical advice, all designed by a single author who clearly knows her subject.

A significant portion of the book focuses on the political and policy dimensions of library advocacy, discussing the distribution of power among different authorities and levels. Lux explains political structures, institutions, and where libraries fit within these frameworks, as well as key issues in library policy. She makes a concerted effort to clarify the specific roles of international bodies such as the European Union and the United Nations, highlighting how their activities can be leveraged by libraries and their associations.

This international focus is crucial, as many important library-related decisions are made by intergovernmental organizations. Monitoring these bodies, particularly in relation to resolutions that are binding on member states, is vital for library representatives and lobbyists, as such decisions can unexpectedly impact core library services.

However, it is at the national and community levels that libraries are directly responsible for developing systems that serve local populations. Institutions at these levels are the primary targets for library advocacy and lobbying efforts. Lux provides numerous examples of advocacy campaigns from different countries, although I found the German cases particularly relatable, likely because they resonate with the context of the countries in which I live.

The chapter on library advocacy within universities, companies, and schools will be particularly useful for staff working in libraries within these organizations. Examples of best practices and successful initiatives from around the world provide a wealth of ideas for libraries facing a variety of challenges.

The book also discusses how to build alliances with organizations that can support the library cause. Important allies, such as political parties, national and international library associations, users, trustees, and library friends, are introduced and characterized in a dedicated chapter. Lux

further explains the benefits of different advocacy methods, while also cautioning against common pitfalls and mistakes.

The most practical sections include tips for successful advocacy (Chapter 17) and useful quotes for advocacy documents and speeches (Chapter 18). The final chapter on the future of library advocacy (Chapter 19) serves more as a recap of key points than an in-depth reflection on future developments.

The book is illustrated with occasional photos of advocacy events, statistical graphs, and models that clarify more complex structures or processes. It also includes a helpful index, making it easy to locate specific topics in this extensive handbook.

I am confident this book will find its place on the desks of library managers and professionals, serving as a valuable guide for their advocacy efforts.

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References

Lux, C. (2022). *Praxishandbuch Richtige Lobbyarbeit für Bibliotheken*. De Gruyter.